

Explore the poster together and provide appropriate resources to help the children bring their fantasy ideas of living in a castle to life

Using the poster

● Set up an interactive 'Castle life' display using the poster as a centrepiece surrounded by the children's drawings and paintings of castles. On a table alongside the display, place relevant book titles, model knights and horses and the children's homemade 'Castle life' book (see Communication, language and literacy ideas below).

- Transform the home area into a castle with suitable dressing-up clothes and resources such as cooking pots and musical instruments. Hang the poster inside the area and join in with the children's play to stimulate ideas.
- Hang the poster alongside small-world people, animals and construction equipment, and provide scraps of fabric, foil and sticky tape to encourage castle-related play.



Activities across the curriculum

Personal, social and emotional development

● Explain to the children the type of people who would have lived in this castle, such as kings, lords, ladies, knights and servants. Invite the children to find the different people on the poster. Encourage the children to find someone who is sleeping, sewing and listening to music. Suggest that the children look in nursery rhyme books and storybooks to find characters such as Humpty Dumpty, Old King Cole, the Grand Old Duke of York, Sleeping Beauty and George and the Dragon.

● Invite the children to point to something that they particularly like on the poster and talk about it. Does it tell them anything about life in a castle?

Communication, language and literacy

● Tell the children about the legend of St George and the Dragon, when George, the patron saint of England, saved the king's daughter from being eaten by a dragon. Ask the children to find St George and the Dragon and invite them to retell the story using the poster to stimulate descriptive language.

● Encourage the children to imagine that they are castle inhabitants and make a castle-shaped book to portray this. Decide upon a focus title for each page, using the poster as a stimulus, for example, 'What will you eat?', 'What jobs will you do?', 'Who will live with you?' and 'How will you protect your castle?'. Let the children draw the pictures and dictate appropriate captions for you to scribe.

Mathematical development

● Explain to the children how castle inhabitants used to keep a lookout for invading armies. Ask the children to find the Grand Old Duke of York and his army approaching on the poster. Find a small hill outdoors, or create one from sand indoors, and let the children re-enact the rhyme with small-world characters. Focus on the words 'up' and 'down', and count your small army. Ask the children to try to imagine the space that the Duke of York's army of 10,000 men would take up.

● Invite the children to build a large castle in a sand tray and to look at the poster for ideas about structure. Introduce language associated with shape and size, for example, 'short, round towers', 'tall, square keep' and 'narrow, pointed windows'. Add small-world people and animals and let the children use their imagination to re-enact castle life.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

● Encourage the children to make a giant castle from large packing cases, smaller cardboard boxes and tubes, using the poster as guidance. Invite the children to choose resources from the home area to bring into their castle, so that they can play in role as castle inhabitants. Provide additional resources such as tin bowls and suitable dressing-up clothes.

● Look at the poster and make comparisons with the children's own homes. What is the castle made of? Are the children's houses made of big stone blocks? Do the castle windows

have glass in? Do the children have drawbridges at home?

Physical development

● Provide different types of construction equipment, such as Duplo or Mobilo, and let the children create castles for small-world characters. Encourage them to use individual component parts to represent furniture. Supply other resources as requested, such as string, fabric scraps and tape. Allow plenty of time for the children's play associated with castles.

● Discuss the activities that the castle inhabitants are carrying out. Invite the children to take turns to pretend to be one of these people and to create a mime to help the rest of the group guess who they are.

Creative development

● Look at the designs on the shields of the knights in the poster and explain that they are called 'coats of arms' that show which family they are from. Invite the children to design their own simple coat of arms on a cardboard shield using brightly coloured paint.

● Ask the children to find Old King Cole on the poster and sing the rhyme together. Explain how lords, dukes and kings would have minstrels to entertain them with instruments such as lutes, harps, trumpets, drums and string instruments. Let the children listen to medieval music and provide suitable percussion instruments to add their own accompaniment.

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